



# Challenging Christians to Pray

# Prayergram

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## Can You Stack Up Against God?

The problem with a lot of our thinking about God is that we try to conceive Him as an “object in space” or a generous benefactor. Even when we believe that He is a personal God, we still are curious about how He navigates the world in which we live! What draws us closer to our God? It’s not levity or curiosity or sentimentality, but lively faith, firm hope and an abiding love that give us intimacy with our Lord.

From the beginning of time, man has tried to investigate, explore the Infinite God out of curiosity, necessity and even just for the sheer fun of it. The Bible tells us that God is a Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. Have you ever thought of God being jealous of our human success? Some still maintain such primitive notion that God is in competition with men; if we prosper and rise to earthly success and advancement, God becomes very uneasy and jealous of our success. Let’s keep in mind that jealousy is a human trait, not a divine one.

There are some who think of God as unknowable, remote, detached and unapproachable. For example, Plato thought it was very difficult to find out anything about God, and whatever could be found out could not possibly be told to anyone else. And according to the Stoics, God is utterly detached from the human race, and we cannot influence Him. Many still retain such notions about God. Even to the Jews, God is the Holy One, the unapproachable One. A curtain hangs in the temple to hide Him; only once a year the Priest was allowed to enter into the holy of holies to make atonement for the sins of the people.

But that was all changed as God sent His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to remind us that He is someone we can relate to, experience and is approachable. In fact, He gave Himself to be our Savior and Friend. Socrates, one of the great philosophers of ancient days, was right when he said, “*Oh, that someone would arise, either man or God, to show us God.*” This heart-cry of Socrates, and of the millions



**Matthew Skariah**

of earth, has been answered in Jesus Christ. Several hundred years before Jesus was born, Zoroaster said, “*God will never be known unless he reveals Himself in human form.*” Yes, God did reveal Himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior.

God is not an object to be discovered, but a divine Presence to be welcomed. He is not a pervasive force like electricity, but a caring and loving father who waits to be loved and worshipped. God’s spirit is indeed invisible, and so is ours, yet isn’t this invisible spirit of

ours the most precious thing about us? Have we seen our spirit? Can we explain the process of body, soul and mind function? It is our human spirit that enables us to understand the various facets of life. Our faith in God is instinctive, it is in our core. Let’s have the “faith and discipline” to see God in every detail. “*Lord, take our hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love.*”

Without God—man has to fabricate himself as immortal. We need to “fess up” that God alone is immortal. There is a dimension of reality, a wonderment and amazement about God and His awesome power in the world. Oh, let us never lose the wonder and the awe of His all-encompassing presence! No matter how sophisticated we may appear, man is still a sinful creature and he is in need of a Savior. But the gullible optimist or (the New Age preachers) would tell us that we are no longer sinners who need the saving grace of God. It should be wise on our part that we should be humble, sincere, and aware of our limited and fallible knowledge.

Our manufactured optimism has collapsed because it deserves to be collapsed. It is based on human fallacies, ideas such as the new science and technology, mastering nature and opening channels of communication, engineering a social society where human beings act and behave like robots. We are living in such a time now. I am convinced that historians of a future date will conclude that we of the 21st century had

the 'know-how' to create a dazzling society through technological advancement, but not the moral wisdom to preserve it.

There are many so-called experts who claim that they can solve our problems by navigating the universe to safety through the storms of life without any supernatural intervention. For example, the scientist claims he can control the weather, and the psychic boasts that he has occult powers to take the untamable universe and tame it. Which is greater, the universe or the God who created the universe? The Creator who encompasses the universe is much more marvelous and revelatory than the universe itself. The depth of our reality, intellectually, morally and spiritually is tested by the words of our Lord, "Come unto me." But knowing human nature, he will argue and dispute with God rather than submit to Him. The omnipotent God who created all things from nothing definitely needs no help or helpers in the administration of His majestic universe. He needs no defenders; He is the undefended and the everlasting One whose majesty and powers are unsurpassed.

"Shall any teach God knowledge? Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him? Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment... Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart." (Job 21:22, 36:22, 37:23, 24)

When we put our faith in God, the impossible becomes possible: that ordinary people like us can enter into a divine relationship with the eternal God. Why not let God's spirit amalgamate with your spirit today? We should approach God with an attitude of reverence. Our God is uncreated, unelected, underived, and unconquered. We did not create God; He created us. We don't hold his hand; He holds our hands. He does not conduct opinion polls, and He is not the least concerned about whether we approve His performance or not. God does not seek man's approval or disapproval. The Lord is not in a quandary as we are; we don't need to educate God about the sinful nature of man. He knows we are sinful, and yet He has chosen to love us with an everlasting love. God does not bargain with man. It is not in the character of God to compromise with sin. He stands alone and works alone. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?" (Romans 11:34).

*God does not play second fiddle to anyone. One cannot frustrate the plan of God. As human beings, we have a tendency to manipulate people as well as circumstances, but we cannot manipulate or frustrate the creator of the universe. We cannot bring almighty God into subjection under any condition. Our agnostic self-reliance will not help us in our hour of need. What Poe had called the "mad pride of intellectuality" had made many presumptuously forget their proper place in God. Our wealth, our fame, and our manufactured pleasures leave us in a strange state of melancholy.*

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Remember that haunting words of Canon Streeter: "I've had experiences which materialism cannot explain." Those of us who are Christians have experienced a higher consciousness that neither science nor materialism can explain in human terms. That is the inter-woven fabrics of the most glorious faith in Christian history—not credulous acceptance of a dogma, but a veritable, first hand experience with spiritual reality. A Christian is a supernatural being who has had a supernatural experience. A lawyer has to believe in the legal system before he can defend someone successfully, and there is no place in his profession for doubt or indecision. The core of Christianity is supernaturalism, not naturalism.

Hugh Walpole described his experience: "I affirm that I have become aware, not by my own wish, almost against my will, of the experience of another life of far, far greater importance and beauty than this physical one." People acquire beliefs and lose beliefs; creeds come and go, theologians and philosophers switch their positions back and forth, movement and ministers appear and disappear, Churches rise and fall, doctrinal arguments lose cogency and must be rephrased every now and then, but a man can bank on his faith in God, without apology to anyone. Today, more than ever, people are trying to give you their point of view over God's point of view. Whenever a minister of the gospel attempts to inject his point of view over God's point of view, it is time to gutter such view and get out of the place as soon as possible. As human beings, we can rationalize our way out of any situation. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

A doctrinal or philosophical belief has no value unless it is practiced in daily Christian living. It is one

thing to preach a message, but it is quite something else to experience the very essence of that message. If I am inclined to treat Almighty God as my celestial errand-boy, or Pal, I always will insist on a god who corresponds in some way pleasing to my desires and propensities, who is suitable to my tastes and preferences. But on the other hand, if I am totally submissive to God's will and purpose, I will always go the extra-mile to please Him without raising the flag of revolt.

God is in the forefront. He is never relegated to the background. He writes the last page, last paragraph, and last line. He alone has the final word. We cannot steal a blessing from God. There is a terrible void in the heart of everyone who rejects God.

Every sin he commits is an attempt to fill that void. All lovers without God are disappointed lovers. As Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless until we find rest in thee, O Lord." Living life without God is not worth living. For example, manufacturer, aviator, and movie producer Howard Hughes had every reason to be happy. Combining his financial reserves and his love for flight, he designed his own aircraft and in July of 1938, circled the earth in a record of 91 hours and 14 minutes. But in 1950 his distrust of people and paranoia of germs led the self-made billionaire into seclusion. He died a lonely death en route from Acapulco, Mexico to Houston, Texas for medical treatment.

Eli Black was known for one thing: his thirst for

Remember,  
*"it's the river that is lost if it misses the sea; if the sea misses the river, what matters? For the sea is the sea for ever." So if we miss God, guess who is going to be the loser!*

power. By using questionable methods he climbed the ladder of success, to reach his goal: the takeover of the United Fruit Company. But soon after he reached the top, he found it wasn't enough. He ended it all by jumping from the forty-second floor of the Pan American Building in New York.

John Lennon, the ex-Beatle had tried it all: drugs, metaphysics, and religion. His records made him millions. His popularity as a singer/song writer made him a living legend. Yet John Lennon's biographer painted him as a frightened man, afraid to touch anything because of its filth and unwilling to sleep with the lights off.

Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul." The heart of man is darker than the darkest night, and only the light of Jesus can dispel the darkness of the human heart. Men are frail and they will soon pass away. Why should we place confidence in frail and fickle men, for men soon fail, and they quickly wither away; but Christ abides forever, and stands by our side firmly to the end? So my dear friend, can you stack up against the Almighty God? As the French philosopher Pascal once said, "Believe in God, you have nothing to lose."

Everything in life begins with God. When we start questioning God, we cease to obey God. When we have obeyed God, the problems never come between us and God.

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## Our Glorious Heritage

### **Matthew Skariah on Christian Martyrdom**

Every disciple of Christ is a potential martyr; he gladly shoulders his cross because Golgotha is his goal. We are martyrs in the making; we do not choose the time or the place for our martyrdom. It's our business to obey God; it is His business to do with us as He pleases. As Job said, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined" (Job 23:10,11).

As Christians, we are not to muddle the issue of 'life and death' with our own intentions and prejudices. In today's highly mobile and sophisticated lifestyle, we invent our own trauma and find it very difficult to live without issues. It is all about us. We have much time on our hand; we are in love with ourselves. As Oswald Chambers once said, "If God has given you a sweet

cup, don't try and make it bitter; and if He has given you a bitter cup, don't try and make it sweet; take things as they come." He who walks on the 'high-way of holiness' finds it very uncomfortable to walk on the curb. Everything that happens to a believer is grist to his constitution. Live on the revelation which God gives, not on what others say about Him.

Those who don't take God seriously, do so with their own self-interest, secular prejudices and carnal propensities without any devotion to the One who loves them. When we argue with God; we try to establish our own righteousness. Those who give themselves wholly to God find themselves in the center of His will. The saints of God do His will freely. They do it delightfully; it is in their DNA. Their will is under the direction of superior will.

## Culture Watch

by  
Matthew Skariah

### Open Season on Christians

“Anti-Christian prejudice is the last respectable bigotry, and it is worse in Canada than anywhere else in the developed world,” says Jewish American Scholar Michael Horowitz, D.C.S’ Hudson Institute. Tolerance for everyone else, but not for Christians! So much for worldwide tolerance and international brotherhood!

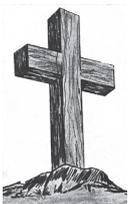
Our forefathers who came to America from Europe to establish a nation that honors God and respect for human lives and individual freedom. First, they built their Churches, and then only they built their houses and schools. Every nation has a heritage, and to say that America is not a Christian nation constitutes the highest form of stupidity and ignorance. From whence cometh this stupidity!

As you know, I am a naturalized citizen of the United States. America is my second homeland. I love this country and I am deeply concerned and committed to pray for her spiritual welfare and her place in history. Recently, our nation was downsized financially, but what we failed to realize is that we have been downsized morally, ethically and spiritually for a long time. There is a concerted effort on the part of secularist to dismantle and destroy the very fabric of this great nation through the backing of the court and the intellectual elite. Some of us saw this was coming, and yet we kept quiet, and now the monster of secularism is on the rise to topple Christianity and silence Christians from the arena of public discourse. Morally, ethically and in matters of soul and conscience, our nation has been going down the hill for quite sometime. So, what can we do as Christians? The worst thing we could do today is to remain silent. Edmond Burke, the great historian said, “*The way for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*” But most importantly, we need to pray for our land as never before in true brokenness and repentance.

We’re told that we cannot pray in public places, we cannot bow our head in honor of our Creator; we cannot display the Ten Commandments and the Cross, the greatest symbol of love on earth. It appears that we Christians cannot even sneeze without getting permission from the Supreme Court. The silencing of Christians has become a worldwide phenomenon; our Christian brothers and sisters are being killed almost daily in Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, North Korea, and China and all over the world, yet the American media is quite silent and indifferent. Let me ask you, why should we even bother to watch the network programs on television, giving them the benefit of rating?

It is almost laughable everyone in America has a right to speak except Christians.

If you are a Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist or Confucianist, you are given much leverage and latitude to do whatever you want, but if you are a Christian you are out of the mainstream. So much for Christian America without Christian freedom! *This is still “One Nation under God,”* and we will not bow our knees to the secularists or the iconoclasts, or the atheists. My brothers and sisters, let’s stand up for Jesus and our faith and speak what is on our mind. By God’s grace and power we will be silent no more. Remember, the Lord has given us the mighty weapon of the power of prayer to pull down the strongholds of Satan as we go onward storming the gates of hell in the mighty name of our risen Lord and King. God will save our beloved land if she repents and turns to Him for help and guidance! “*LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God*” (Psalms 90:1, 2).



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PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE — 2 Chronicles 7:14



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